

MR. P. M. VARGHESE : What are we to understand by the expression "under consideration"? How long is to be "under consideration"?

MR. A. NARAYANAN TAMPI : I would invite the attention of the honourable member to the fact that the petition was received only on the 7th February and certainly it cannot be decided so soon. It has to be sent to the Inspector of Schools for report. Only after her report is received can the question be considered.

Famine Enquiry Commission.

109. * **MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI :** Will the Government be pleased to state:

- (a) when the Famine Enquiry Commission appointed by the Government of India visited Trivandrum;
- (b) how many days the Commission stayed in Trivandrum;
- (c) whether the Commission took any evidence in Trivandrum or in any other part of the State;
- (d) the persons whom the Commission met in Travancore;
- (e) who arranged such meetings; and
- (f) whether any members of the Legislature were invited by the Government to meet the Commission, if so who they were?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : (a) During the 3rd week of October 1944.

- (b) Four days.
- (c) No. Their visit was purely informal and was intended to study conditions and not to hold any enquiry or to take evidence.
- (d) Both officials and non-officials.
- (e) The Government.
- (f) Yes. The members of the Food Advisory Committee including some members of the Legislature were informed that the members of the Commission would like to meet them informally.

Their names are :—

1. Mr. M. Govindan
2. " K. G. Narayana Panicker
3. " K. A. Raman Pillai
4. " K. Shahul Hameed
5. " S. Chattanatha Karayalar
6. " C. S. Lakshmana Aiyar
7. " K. Sukumaran
8. " A. N. Satyanesan
9. " V. S. Krishna Pillai
10. " M. Sivathanu Pillai
11. " G. Narayana Aiyar
12. " K. P. Amrithanatha Aiyar
13. Srimati T. Narayani Amma

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : Answer to part (c) of the question is "No: Their visit was purely informal and was intended to study conditions and not to hold any enquiry, or to take evidence". When there is an opposition party in the Legislature, may I know whether the Government considered it advisable to take them also into their confidence along with the other members?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : There is no such thing because the answer clearly says that such of those members as could be immediately had to meet the commission were just asked to do so.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : No, it is not given like that.

PRESIDENT : The Famine Enquiry Commission had no jurisdiction over Indian States. They were appointed to consider conditions in British India. They therefore asked permission whether they could come here because they had been informed that in Cochin and Travancore the food situation had been dealt with, at all events, in their opinion, more efficaciously than in most of the States. The Government of India requested that they should be allowed to come here and meet the people. The original idea was that they should meet only the Government. After they came here they wanted to meet certain non-officials also. That was a mere concession which they asked for and a certain number of members of the Food Advisory Committee and others were asked to meet them.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know why certain members of the Assembly were excluded.

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : No member was excluded particularly.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : Is it a mere accident that no member of the State Congress party was invited?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : It might be an accident.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know whether it was an accident?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : I do not know that. The Members of the Famine Enquiry Commission wanted to meet a few non-officials at short notice. Government could not go about, search and decide as to who all should be invited. Such of the members who were easily available were invited.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : Does the member know that there are members of the State Congress party, resident in Trivandrum.

PRESIDENT : Let there not be any camouflage about it. I may make it clear that having regard to the policy of the State Congress with regard to which I said something yesterday, it may not be possible to choose one member from a particular party and another member from the State Congress party. So long as the State Congress is not willing to co-operate with the Government and try to attribute motives to the Government by means of questions, if it is a matter of discretion for the Government to choose A, B or C to meet the Viceroy or a member of the Council, they will prefer somebody to the State Congress. Let there not be any camouflage about it.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: Has there been any single instance in which the State Congress wanted to vilify the Government?

PRESIDENT: Unfortunately some of the questions put from the very inception of the new party in the Legislature were decidedly meant to detract the reputation of Government. In a few minutes I am going to mention another very conspicuous instance to which members of the State Congress now present here are parties. Certain etiquettes and politeness is all right up to a point. If the Viceroy wants to meet let us say, State Congress Members, then of course he will be given convenience to meet the members of the State Congress. But supposing he wants to meet the members of the Legislature—and he can meet only 5 or 6—then Government will choose those who will best serve the interests of Government. There is no point in concealing these things. I may make these things very clear.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: Are we also not representing the constituencies of Travancore.

PRESIDENT: Supposing the Government come to the conclusion that those representatives are bent on a policy detrimental to Government, then, in a matter of discretion it is open to them to choose somebody in preference to the State Congress. Supposing a member of the bar has to be given a high appointment. There may be a member of the State Congress and also another member. They have equal qualifications. If it is a question of choice by Government, certainly they will prefer the other member in preference to the State Congress member. There is no doubt about that. The only thing is that these things are not said openly. Everybody conceals them. But I feel that the time has now come when there should be no further concealment of these things. If there are two people equally qualified and one is a State Congress man, so long as the State Congress is led by such people I have referred to, and if it is a question of choice, certainly Government will choose the non-congress to the State Congress. That is regarded as the policy of the Government.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: We are not afraid of such invidious discrimination.

PRESIDENT: We are afraid the best interests of the country are not served by the State Congress. I do not say anything against the State Congress as a body, its ideas or ideals. This Government have no quarrel with them. The party is at liberty to put forward as vehemently and as strongly as possible the claims of the people for Responsible Government. If that was the only ideal of the State Congress, Government will have nothing against it. But so long as the State Congress pursues a policy directed by Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai when he was a member of this House and which he has been pursuing ever since he has been the President of the State Congress, so long as Annie Mascarene goes to Bangalore and meets the Dewan and says things of an atrocious character, all personally against people of the highest position in Travancore, so long as such people have anything to do with the Congress and the Congress bodies, Government

[President.]

will consider any body connected with the State Congress as not acting in the best interests of the public, although they may claim to represent the best interest of the country. We are in a vantage position. I do not want to conceal that. So long as we are in this position as I honestly feel we are, the policy pursued by the State Congress is detrimental to the best interests of the country.

MR. S. SANKARANARAYANAN TAMPI (*Karunagapalli cum Kartigapalli*): May I know who are responsible for the choice of the members to meet the Famine Enquiry Commission?

PRESIDENT: I am personally responsible for the choice of the members who met the Famine Enquiry Commission. Supposing I have to introduce some members to the Viceroy from a body of 500 people, certainly I, as head of the administration, will take the responsibility for introducing them to the Viceroy.

MR. S. SANKARANARAYANAN TAMPI: May I know whether no member of the State Congress was invited because of the intolerance of opposition by the Government?

PRESIDENT: As it is a personal matter I wish to make a personal explanation. Some of my dearest and most valued friends are amongst the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. I do not hold any body dearer, and a greater politician than Jawaharlal Nehru, the members of whose family have been of the most cordial relationship with my family. Messrs. Babu Rajendraprasad, Doulatram and Mahatma Gandhi although they pursue a policy which I do not agree with are yet my intimate friends. At all events I pride myself to call them so. It is well known that Mr. Sathyamurti was the main opponent of the Mettur and Pykara Schemes and was opposing me tooth and nail during the five years we worked together in the Madras Legislature. But still our personal relationships were of the most cordial character. Therefore it cannot be said that there is intolerance. I would ask the Honourable members of the State Congress to rest assured that there will be no personal intolerance. Honourable members may see that members who have attacked this Government, persons who have carried campaign against this Government, are now working in conjunction and in co-operation with this Government. Persons who have been sent to jail for Political offences are now holding appointments under the Government.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: Does it mean that the Government gave them appointments after they left the State Congress or before that? Do they still hold their views?

PRESIDENT: Therefore the intolerance of opposition which was referred to does not exist. If opposition is on a matter of principle, on a matter of policy, however strong and vehement that opposition might be, it will not be the policy of this Government to express any disapproval of that policy as such. Those who put forward the policy will be considered as honest antagonists who are on the other side in certain public questions. But I want to make it clear again as I had made

clear before, that if the opposition be personal or baseless, then of course the position changes. It is because the present leaders of the Travancore State Congress and some of the actions of the present State Congress are considered by the Government as not being in the public interest that Government are taking action. I want to make it abundantly clear to this House.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know from the Government what they mean by "personal?"

PRESIDENT : I have already cleared the matter.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : In view to the answer of the President and in view to the question that I have asked, I may be permitted to offer an explanation. It has been suggested that the State Congress Party in this Assembly had been imbued with malignant motives. The Dewan-President had been remarking that it is due to the nature of the questions that we were asking viz., questions about the granting of licences to newspapers, the ban on periodicals and the leasing out of transport and other workshops etc., that the Government thought that the activities of the State Congress were not in the public interests. That is certainly not the case.

PRESIDENT : Any question that is impersonal or what may be called subterranean in inference is a question which will not be resented.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : Therefore so many questions had been asked and many other questions had not been admitted and not answered. But we have to face the country. There are apprehensions in the country. There are rumours set afloat in the country and we have to answer them. When we ask questions of such a nature it is very improper to say.....

PRESIDENT : Order, order. There are a hundred ways in putting questions. Supposing for instance a question is asked—as it has unfortunately been asked on a previous occasion—whether my son was a Legal Adviser to some company or other and whether that company has not been given certain concessions because he was its Legal Adviser, what I wish to impress on the members who put such questions is that they might have at least ascertained beforehand whether my son was the Legal Adviser of that Company and whether the company got anything as a result of that Legal Adviser. That is a kind of question which is crucial in this matter. If, however, in order to dispel rumours that the Dewan is handing over licences to people who benefit him personally or his family and if honourable members do not want to make of it a public affair and had put a question to me direct by letter, I would have replied. It would be the elementary duty of myself and all the officers of Government to reply to such questions. If, however, the result of that answer was such that the honourable member was dissatisfied and had thought that something was wrong, then he could put forward an interpellation. But putting forward an interpellation on a matter which rests on guess-work and on personal motives is a thing which comes within the object to which I had referred.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: I may be permitted to reply in regard to this matter. My point is, should not these mis-givings or mis-apprehensions in the minds of the entire population of Travancore be cleared in the Assembly.

PRESIDENT: Order, order. I have attacked the present leadership of the Travancore State Congress and I have a right to defend the people against it.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: Suppose I send a private letter to you and elicit a piece of information, would it generally satisfy the general public?

PRESIDENT: Undoubtedly. You are also at liberty to publish it as this is a question of great importance.

MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU (*Karunagapalli cum Karthikapalli*): May I know the name of the honourable gentleman who dragged in the name of the President's son?

PRESIDENT: I shall not give the name for obvious reasons. The question has been put and disallowed.

Order, order. It has now come to my notice that a committee called the Kerala Society Relief Committee convened under the leadership of Sri Nagindas Master, Mayor of Bombay, has been constituted and that a committee consisting of Messrs. Varghese, Kumbalom Sanku Pillai, A. P. Udayabhanu, P. N. Krishna Kurup, K. Janardhanan Nair, P. Bhaskar and Sankara Pillai for distress relief work in Travancore. It is stated that a sum of Rs. 3,000 has been allotted for opening medical relief centres in this State. I may say at once as I have stated on more than one occasion that it is the unalterable policy of the State that during this period of strain and stress no monetary relief from outside the State should be obtained. I am, therefore, writing to Mr. Nagindas Master pointing out my earlier utterances and appealing to him not to send any money to Travancore. It is most humiliating—I have not concealed it from the public here or elsewhere and I have said so in Delhi and Bombay—for an administration which has got ample funds at its disposal and which is suffering, if anything, from a plethora of money, to see that for the relief of distress it asks for subscription from outside. It was because the Servants of India Society represented by Mr. K. G. Sivaswami, notwithstanding my definite instructions, collected money on pretences—I use the word deliberately—that there was starvation which without the money that was needed would become worse and undertook to send figures of starvation and death, that I have to reiterate my statement. I re-emphasise it again. If it is a question of relief, and it is a matter in which there is no distinction between one political party and another, if the members of the State Congress or any of the persons whose names I have now read will bring to the notice of any Head of Department or to the Surgeon-General if it is in respect of medical relief, that there is any relief necessary and that relief is considered essential, the Government will allot not only Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 30,000 but Rs. 3,00,000 which will be placed at the disposal of the people for such relief. If there is real starvation in the country, if there are families

starving in this country, and if the names of these families are sent to Government, the Government will place at the disposal of the people concerned or for the use of the relief organizations not merely a sum of Rs. 500 or 5,000 or 50,000 but five lakhs of rupees. Only the factum of the relief must be proved. The necessity for the relief must be proved and the necessity must be made clear to the Head of Department concerned who will at once see to the distribution of money. I therefore hold that it is not in the interests of the State, but is derogatory to the prestige and reputation of the State, especially when our finances are definitely showing a surplus of about Rs. 5 crores, to go to Bombay and arrange for collection of money. I hope that what I say here will be carried outside this State. I hope also that people outside this State will on no account grant the prayers of anybody, at the instance or at the behest of anybody, and send any money for any kind of relief in this State.

MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU : But the Government have not sanctioned the grant to Kumbalom Sanku Pillai in Karthikapalli taluk.

PRESIDENT : I hope the sanction will be availed of if and when it is made.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : Can we comment on that statement?

PRESIDENT : No.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Muslim voters to the State Council.

7. MR. P. K. KUNJU (Ambalapuzha cum Shertala) : Will the Government be pleased to state the number of Muslim voters to the State Council from the following constituencies :

(a) Ambalapuzha-Shertala, Karunagapally and Karthikapally constituency; and

(b) Trivandrum—Nedumangad, and Chirayinkil constituency.

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : The numbers according to the Electoral Rolls prepared in 1119 are—

(a) 395.

(b) 440.

Muslim voters to the Sri Mulam Assembly.

8. MR. P. K. KUNJU : Will the Government be pleased to state the number of voters from Muslim Community to the Sri Mulam Assembly from—

(a) Ambalapuzha-Shertala Constituency,

(b) Quilon-Kottarakara constituency,

(c) Kunnathnad-Parur constituency,

(d) Karunagapally-Karthikapally constituency, and

(e) Chirayinkil-Nedumangad constituency?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : The numbers according to the Electoral Rolls prepared in 1119 are—

(a) 3,061.

(b) 3,994.

(c) 3,966.

(d) 4,641.

(e) 6,382.